

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 OIC-02 SSO-00 ARAE-00 SP-02 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9246

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 9175

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XM, AR, US

SUBJECT: MEETINGS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (MFM) IN BUENOS AIRES

1. ON DEC 19, AMBASSADOR FIGUERERO, SECRETARY PRO TEM OF MFM, INFORMALLY EXPRESSED TO EMBOFF THE CONCERN OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT WHAT HE TERMED "TRIAL BALLONS" APPARENTLY AIMED AT CANCELLING OR POSTPONING MARCH MFM. ORIGIN OF THIS REACTION WAS PRESS STORIES DEC 18 AND 19 DATELINED WASHINGTON, APPARENTLY ORIGINATING WITH STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES. THESE STORIES INDICATED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HOPES TO EITHER: A) HOLD OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATELY AFTER MFM; B) HOLD BOTH MFM AND OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN WASHINGTON; OR C) POSTPONE ONE OF THE MEETINGS, PROBABLY MFM, SINCE OAS MEETING MUST DEAL WITH IMPORTANT MATTERS SUCH AS BUDGET AND ELECTION OF NEW SECRETARY GENERAL, WHILE (ACCORDING TO THESE REPORTS) THE MFM WOULD BE WITHOUT MUCH SUBSTANCE UNLESS THE US MAKES SOME DRAMATIC CONCESSION.

2. FIGUERERO'S REACTION WAS QUITE SHARP. HE SAID THAT THE GOA WOULD NOT AGREE TO HOLD OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN BUENOS AIRES FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING FACT THAT ONLY SUITABLE PLACE TO HOLD SUCH MEETINGS IS FULLY BOOKED BEFORE AND AFTER MFM. FURTHERMORE, HOLY WEEK COMES IMMEDIATELY AFTER MFM, MAKING IT VIRTUALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION TO HOLD MEETINGS BACK TO BACK. ADDED THAT DATES FOR MFM ARE NOW LOCKED IN.

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3. FIGUERERO SAID THAT STORIES SEEMED TO REFLECT MOVE APPARENTLY

AIMED AT TORPEDOING MFM AND HAD CAUSED ANNOYANCE IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. IF THEY WERE OFFICIALLY INSPIRED, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED RATHER UNFRIENDLY. AMBASSADOR FIGUERERO WAS CAREFUL TO KEEP THIS REACTION ON AN INFORMAL BASIS AND DID NOT SPECIFICALLY STATE THAT HE WAS CONVEYING THE VIEWS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HOWEVER, IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS HE RAISED AN ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER CONNECTED WITH MFM AND TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAD JUST SPOKEN TO FOREIGN MINISTER AND HAD HIS AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE AN ADMINISTRATIVE PROPOSAL TO EMBOFF (SEPTTEL). JUXTAPOSITION OF THESE TWO SUBJECTS SEEMED DESIGNED TO CONVEY INDIRECTLY THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING THE WHOLE MFM MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND WAS CONVEYING HIS VIEWS. OTHER FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES HAVE REMAINED QUIET ON THE SUBJECT BUT THERE IS OBVIOUS ANNOYANCE.

4. EMBASSY REQUESTS AUTHORIZATION TO REITERATE FIRM COMMITMENT OF US AT THIS TIME TO HOLDING MARCH MFM IN BUENOS AIRES.
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